



## ADA Facts

# HALLUCINOGENS

Hallucinogens are drugs that distort one's perceptions, sensations, thinking, self-awareness, and emotions. The most well-known hallucinogens include phencyclidine (PCP) also called "angel dust;" lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) also known as "acid;" mescaline and peyote; and psilocybin, also called "magic mushrooms." These drugs cause unpredictable reactions, including erratic behavior and violence. Users having a "bad trip" sometimes cause harm to themselves or others. The experience can leave psychological scars and sometimes "flashbacks," where the "trip" is relived months or even years later, long after the drug use has ended.

### ▼ Some Common Drugs

PCP is a white crystalline powder that is highly soluble in water and alcohol. It is available as a powder, tablet, capsule, or liquid. PCP is commonly applied to leafy materials such as parsley, oregano, mint, or marijuana and smoked.

LSD is usually sold in the form of small tablets, in thin squares of gelatin, or on stamp-sized pieces of paper. Always taken orally, tolerance to LSD develops rapidly.

Mescaline is a natural hallucinogen that is derived from the fleshy parts or buttons of the peyote cactus. It is smoked or taken orally. Psilocybin is an active ingredient in certain species of mushrooms.

### ▼ Physical Effects

Hallucinogens cause increased heart rate and blood pressure, sleep disorders, tremors, incoherent speech, loss of coordination, loss of awareness of pain, nausea and vomiting, high fever, convulsions, coma, and heart and lung failure.

### ▼ Psychological Effects

Users of hallucinogens report seeing (even "hearing") colors and shapes and of having a distorted perception of distance and time during a "trip." Afterward, they often feel estranged from others, depressed, anxious, and paranoid. They also experience confusion, suspicion, and loss of control over their actions. Many PCP-related deaths are not the result of overdose. Numerous accidental drownings, leaps from high places, vehicular accidents, suicides, homicides and self-mutilations have occurred because of the unpredictable psychological effects of this drug.

Since hallucinogens interfere with thought and concentration, activities such as driving a vehicle or operating machinery can be especially hazardous. Hallucinogens produce visual, auditory and tactile distortions, as well as distortions of time and distance. Poor judgment, slower reflexes, poor coordination, distraction and drowsiness can all occur when an individual is under the influence of hallucinogens.

### ▼ Additional Information

For additional information about hallucinogens, visit the websites of the National Institute on Drug Abuse, NIDA ([www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)), and the National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, NCADI ([www.health.org](http://www.health.org)).



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